NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

NOTES ON NEW BOOKS.

VILLETTE. By CURRER BELL, author of "Jane Eyre," "Shirley," &c. London: Smith, Elder & Co. 1853.

These volumes have been reprinted among us by the Messrs. Harper, and *Villette* has for some time been a household name among young ladies at boarding-school, and around the centre tables in our drawing-rooms. Professional novel readers have not perhaps even yet quite forgotten the impression it made upon them at the time of its first appearance in our midst, though they have averaged about one novel a day since its perusal. Young ladies and young gentlemen "moving in fashionable circles" have rested from the calisthenics of polking and waltzing, or from scientific experiments in the circular rotation of tables, to indulge in the mutual interchange and comparison of opinions as to the merits and demerits of Currer Belle's "last;" and as this pseudonymous personage does not execute a novel quite as rapidly and frequently as Mr. James, it never becomes a matter of much difficulty for our drawing-room critics to remember what the "last" really is. Indeed a new work from the authoress of *Jane Eyre* is an event in the literary world to be duly chronicled and celebrated by the "reading public." The ennuyé'd constituents of this class, consisting of "general readers," chatty society-men, subscribers to circulating libraries, literary mantua-makers, and boarding-school girls aforesaid, have not forgotten the glad surprise with which they were treated in the advent of *Jane Eyre*. It was a *bonne bouche* that titillated even their pampered palate. It proved that the materials of literary excitement had not yet been all used up by the enterprising craft of novel mongers. It sent a new pulse and a thrill through many a heart which had got the dropsy from indulging too freely in the "weak, washy, and everlasting flood" of modern fiction. It was clear that "Currer Bell" had immortalized herself for more than the stated period of nine days, and that she would take her rank among the first of our novel writers if she could only be kept from making haste to write herself down.

After a short interval "Shirley" appeared, with enough of difference from Jane Eyre to justify us in calling it a *novel*, and with enough of similarity to make the reader miss the piquant relish with which he had devoured the antecedent volume. And now comes "*Villette*," which seems to us nothing more than *Jane Eyre* enlarged and intensified. Miss Bronte (for we shall drop the *nom de plume* for the real name of our authoress) always *writes* with remarkable power; *invent* and *combine* she cannot. While by the mere vigor of her style she contrives to throw the strongest air of reality over her entire story, she mars its effect by a lamentable lack of veri-similitude in adjusting the sequences of her narrative. With descriptive powers that constitute her a painter in words, she sometimes lets herself down to locutions inexcusable for their carelessness and vulgarity. Possessing a most enviable mastery of the choicest English, she yet loves to interlard her diction with a perpetual recurrence of French phrases, and always foists in one or two of German.

"Villette" is an autobiography, in which Lucy Snowe details for our benefit a history of her life and progress as a schoolmistress. Miss Bronte has evidently an affection—*penchant* she of course would call it—for the scholastic art; it is in pædagogy that her genius seems freest. Jane Eyre was a charity scholar, and teacher in a charity school, and then a governess, and then a full-fledged schoolmistress. The chief hero of "Shirley" is a private tutor who falls in love with his pupil, the "leopardess Shirley" herself. And in "Villette" we have nothing but schools, school-masters, school-mistresses, and school-girls from beginning to end. And yet it is no more than fair to allow that Miss Bronte's characters are interesting in themselves, and not by virtue of their relations to the outer world. It is not rank, or position, or circumstances which give either dignity or beauty to human nature as she most loves to conceive it. The solitary striving of a friendless and homeless orphan girl; the lonely musings of an humble but aspiring tutor; the self-reliant and self-sustaining energies of one who, scorning to eat the bread of idleness or dependance, goes forth alone to mingle in the battle of life, compose the qualities for which her heroes and heroines are alike most distinguished, if we regard merely the external features in their life and history. But it is in the midst of a life like this that she introduces the feelings, the yearnings, and the aspirations which the cultivated mind and the human heart entitle their possessors to cherish, but which social distinctions and the stress of daily toil threaten to preclude the opportunity of realizing and enjoying. If Democracy be, as Mr. Bancroft metaphysically defines it, "the supremacy of man over his accidents," then are Miss Bronte's novels democratic in the fullest sense of the word. It is woman, and not *lady*; man, and not *nobleman*, whom she makes the chosen depositaries of all that gives true dignity and worth to humanity; and then in the most approved way, according to the true novel-style, she shows how, even in the plodding, drudging governess—

> All thoughts, all feelings, all delights,
> Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
> All are but ministers of love,
> And serve to feed its flame.

She requires a very small allowance of personal pulchritude with which to endow her heroines; it is enough if they just escape being positively ugly. The adventitious "accidents" of rank and wealth she either wholly discards, or sets very little store by them, as mere make-weights in her estimate of human worth.

We cannot think Miss Bronte's productions are pleasant or agreeable reading. Her books do not *please*, however much they may interest us. She does not look at life on its bright side. Well may it be said that she carries us through her pages as over a wild and desolate heath, with a sharp east wind blowing the hair into our eyes and making the blood tingle in our veins: there is health perhaps in such a drive; excitement there certainly is, but for us not much pleasantness. She keeps us in a constant "worriment" about the fate of her favorites. Their life seems destined from the start to be full of pain, resembling the biographies which Paulina descants on in the tale before us, where the wayfarer seems to journey on from suffering to suffering, where hope flies ever onward, but never alights so near or lingers so long as to give the hand a chance of one realizing grasp. To live in peace and be happy is the probable lot of but few among mortals, yet it is from these few that the old novelists selected their subjects, and then sought to enlist our sympathies in behalf of hero and heroine when misfortune, disappointment, and "a thousand odd caprices" have intervened to dash from their lips the cup of happiness which they seemed born to sip. The lives and loves of Miss Bronte's autobiographers run from the first another course. On the road which they travel the weather is fitful and gusty, wild and variable; adverse winds are to be breasted, and constant fear oppresses the spirit lest they may, after all, be belated and overtaken by the early closing winter night. Such *is* the fate of Lucy Snowe.

The tendency of tales like these, in which the mind is constantly burdened by a sense of the social wrongs to which those are subjected who have educated their tastes beyond their position and prospects, is of very doubtful utility. Such subjects, if indiscreetly or intemperately handled, are open to the suspicion of being adapted to foster discontent where it already exists, and to generate it where it does not. The former volumes of Miss Bronte were much more obnoxious to such an imputation than is "Villette." A more sobered and chastened view of the world and of human life seems to have dawned upon the mind of the writer. The sensible horizon of the worldling and the temporizer seems to have expanded into the rational horizon of the christian. The element of a passionate human love which breathes through all the pages of *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley*, is in *Villette* no longer a leaping flame but a smouldering fire, guarded it may be with vestal diligence, but also with vestal purity. The morality of *Villette* is, besides, unexceptionable. It contains none of the doubtful casuistry and hinted evil and flat blasphemy which mar the pages of *Jane Eyre*. But with these abatements, we repeat that *Villette* is nothing more than a reproduction of *Jane Eyre*. Lucy Snowe is almost an exact counterpart of the earlier heroine. M. Paul Emanuel is at once an exaggeration of and an improvement upon that type of all that is masculine, Edwin Rochester. Miss Ginevra Fanshaw is another little Adèle de Varens. Mrs. Bretton is only a revised and amended Widow Fairfax. The feline Madam Beck and the ethereal Paulina are new conceptions, at least as far as Miss Bronte is concerned.

As a work of literary art "Villette" is chiefly admirable for its portraiture of character. We have heard it observed that the composition of such a novel evinces an analytical power and a knowledge of human nature quite sufficient to make a book on metaphysics, had they only received the proper direction. We have not heard, however, that any one regrets this misapplication of Miss Bronte's talent for metaphysic: with all her wit in this line the public is quite willing to forego the "psychologies" she might write, if she will only favor us occasionally with a few more novels "of the same sort." As Junius advised Garrick to "stick to his pantomimes," we too would blandly exhort the Yorkshire authoress to stick to her romances. There is more money and more fame to be made out of these, as the world now goes, than could be won by the genius of a new Plato. What, forsooth, is the reputation of a Bacon or a Locke to that of a Dickens or a Mrs. Stowe? What, though we may never produce another "Novum Organon," have we not "Uncle Tom's Cabin?"

Dr. Blair, that patriarch of Scotch criticism in his day, deemed it almost necessary to offer some apology for admitting "fictitious histories" within the pale of lawful literature. At the present day every other order of literary activity seems in danger of being superseded by the novel. The time for the composition of dramas and odes, epic poems, and polite literature in general, has long gone by; we may as well admit the fact, for we need but to open our eyes to witness its confirmation. A "polite literature," properly so called, has become fossil among us. Of *reviews, scientific summaries*, and *tales* there is no lack; but for the higher products of literary art there is positively no demand; and the relations between supply and demand hold good no less in literature than in commerce: in the book-trade and the cotton mart, in French novels and Ohio pork, the same law regulates the production and the consumption. We often make it a subject of indignant remark that Milton should have found no publisher willing to buy the copyright of *Paradise Lost* for any thing more than £5; but we greatly question whether he would have succeeded in getting it printed at all, had he lived in our day. What publisher among us would risk a new epic poem, however transcendent its merits? The thing is not called for; in the vulgate, "it will not pay." True there are certain old epopees of established reputation which are occasionally reprinted among us, and then bound in "morocco extra" and "double gilt" to adorn the shelves of our book-cases. They are of the books "which must be in every man's library," but they are not of the books which the "reading public" desiderate. They are much talked about, but very little read.

Shall we say, then, that genius and invention have become extinct? Not so; they have only been directed into new channels—into the composition of a different kind of *machinery* from that which the critics have agreed to admire in the Homeric mythology. We have genius among us still, though the name by which it is best known is *ingenuity*—its working is seen in the products of modern mechanic art and of modern fancy, in steam engines and novels. Telegraph wires and *Uncle Tom*, as we take it, are the highest and grandest exponents of modern mind. The force of nature, can it farther go? We scarcely hope it; but when we see what the "cute Yankees" have already accomplished in the way of spinning jennies and romances there is no telling what may yet happen. The telegraphs may yet have to come down, (recent researches show that electricity does not travel quite as fast as was supposed,) and even *Uncle Tom* may be compelled to hide his "diminished head." We are a fast people; but will not "Young America" be a faster? "Uncle Tom's Cabin" will do for the present; but are we quite sure that the banjo literature is the highest *possible* development? Are there not some intimations already that a new literary era is dawning upon us? Negrophilism has had its day; the reign of "spiritualism" has commenced. Already its literature covers the land, and the thrilling histories of seraphic negroes are giving place to the awful disclosures of heavenly "mejums." But we must beg pardon for speaking of novels with this undue levity. They are earnest and serious things; they no longer bear any resemblance to those curious productions which charmed our ancestors, the interminable romances of a Richardson and a Scuderi. Of these, the purpose was merely to amuse. They aimed merely to supply that easy reading which would just suffice to keep their elegant leisure from lapsing wholly into inanition. They were books which furnished just that minimum of excitation which is found inducive of drowsiness. Many a periwigged head has nodded over the woes of Pamela and the loves of Clarissa Harlowe, and got two nights of good sleep out of a single love-letter of Sir Charles Grandison's. There was not much danger to be apprehended from such books; they were not inflammatory in their character, except perhaps when they were the means of setting a reader's bed-curtains on fire by lulling him to sleep before he had time to think of his candle. But such is not the nature or the aim of modern fiction. Novels are no longer written merely to amuse indolence or kill time; though these are not wanting by those among us who still make them subserve these beneficent purposes. They now seek not so much to beguile the tedium of life by that mixture of the lie which, Bacon asserts, doth ever give pleasure, as to impress certain grave truths in morals, politics, and religion upon the "universal mind" of the public, or, still better, by falling in with a direction of thought or feeling already impressed to give it new intensity. We may sneer at them for their insignificance, and in themselves considered they are sometimes petty and contemptible enough; but we cannot ignore their influence or deny its efficiency. Like thistle-down, they float on every breeze and insure a full crop of the kindred weed on whatever soil they may chance to alight. The *sottises* of Candide and the sophistries of Dr. Pangloss did more to sap the fabric of social and civil order in France than all the disquisitions of the Encyclopedia, though the same hands worked on both alike; and more recently we all know that Eugene Sue and Madame George Sand have preached socialism and its kindred abominations with greatly more success than has attended the more imposing and systematic treatises of Fourier or Proudhon. The recent perturbation of social order throughout continental Europe did not spring so much from the magnanimous resolve of a people determined to be free as from the feverish and spasmodic ravings of an overwrought imagination. Those who are familiar with the works most popular in Germany just previous to those outbursts of popular revolt will know how much of truth is contained in this assertion. In our country we may not be harassed by any fears lest a *Blithedale* romance may inoculate the popular mind with a contagion like socialism; the *Partisan Leader* has not yet dissolved the Union; but do they not tell us that *Uncle Tom* is destined to abolish "the peculiar institution?" Tremble for your cotton, ye planters of Alabama! and look to your workshops, oh men of Manchester! "Whether we have a Bourbon among us" is of no consequence. We have an "Uncle Tom."

The reading public must have excitement. This commodity is in great demand; and to supply it is the question of the times. The appetite for horrors is not satisfied by a supper of them; we breakfast on them; we dine off of them. And still, like the daughter of the horse-leech, the cry is, Give! Give! In vain do the boilers of our steamboats collapse, and, in hot haste to make "the quickest passage on record," accomplish the desired end by blowing their living freight out of time into eternity. In vain do engines of steam vie with engines of war in deeds of blood and murder, now like fiery fiends ploughing their way through the human flesh and fibre which a rival train has whirled across their path; and now like a rampant devil plunging down abysmal precipices or leaping into bridgeless chasms, the more securely to craunch the hecatomb of victims offered up by Heedlessness and Avarice to glut this worse than ancient Moloch. In vain do our journals teem with thrilling tales of ships that have gone down at sea or on some placid inland lake, with their hundreds of living souls quenched out in the gurgling waters. Such "moving accidents by flood and field" will some time cease to move. They pall upon the taste by reason of surfeit. A new agony must be had: an ideal one will answer quite as well as one that is "ower true;" and such is the generation of the novel. It is no sooner wanted than forth comes the genius to cater for the craving. If in Paris the want of a new "infernal machine" should ever come to be extensively felt, his Majesty Napoleon III. may depend upon it that an inventor will not long be wanting. And so in literature, you may predict that when the popular taste demands a more high-spiced broth, there will always be plenty of cooks to brew it.

Now, our blood has long since refused to curdle over the ghostly pages of Mistress Anne Radcliffe. Ghouls and phantoms, clanking chains, floors that suddenly give way, mysterious noises issuing from subterraneous passages, doors that are opened and closed by unseen hands—all these, like Schiller's fairies, "have vanished from the faith of reason." Religious novels, like that "love of a book," the "Lady of the Manor," whose devout prayers and feeling love-letters lie atop of each other like sandwiches, have long since been voted a bore. Allegorical novels, like some that Mrs. Edgeworth perpetrated, where we are made sorry to learn that the hero is capital, and that the heroine represents the three per cent. consols, are grown positively insufferable. The historical novels which Scott poured out, as if from the cornucopia of Fancy, no longer appear, except some few, which come out at the little end of her horn in the hands of Mr. James or Harrison Ainsworth. Dickens, with all his play upon our gentle sympathies, is becoming too voluminous, and maudlin folk begin to fear that he has lost the power to unseal new fountains of tears.

In view of all these facts, we are justified in making what the French critics would pompously call "a generalization." It being evident that the "reading public," under the above circumstances, must experience a new craving, it is equally evident, according to the pre-established harmony between supply and demand, that certain romancists must arise to gratify this craving; and herein we behold the necessity of Mr. Thackeray, Miss Bronte, and Mrs. Stowe. *Quod erat demonstrandum.* Mr. Thackeray saw that the literary world needed a change of diet. Other novelists had taught man to love, to admire, to fear, to weep. Mr. Thackeray teaches him to sneer, to mock, to point the finger, and loll out the tongue. He shows us that the world is all a sham, a "Vanity Fair" on the big scale, and that a Mephistophelean skepticism is the best safeguard against deception. He rips up all the disguises with which hypocrisy pays homage to virtue, until we begin to doubt whether virtue be any thing more than a name. He disenchants us of all our boyish illusions about honor, generosity, benevolence, delicacy, and disinterestedness; he shows us how selfishness rules the world. His unselfish characters are always either fools or sneaks. It is thus that he has opened for us a new source of literary emotion—painful it is true, but *dear* because it broke out in a new spot.

Of Miss Bronte we have already spoken enough. She diverts us from a stagnant state of feeling by egging us on to pick a quarrel with nature, society, and the laws, because the marriage prospects of her governesses are not quite so good as could be wished. She has no patience with Nature in repose; she loves to paint life as a struggle and a strife. If she practised the sculptor's art, Laocoon wrestling with the snakes would be the first fruits of her chisel. She has not much faith in goodness. She has but a faint hope in providence. She keeps her favorite characters in constant pain, and gives them nothing better than stoicism with which to bear it. She endows them with large capacities for blissfulness, but very slender means, and contingent hopes of enjoying it. Now, such portraitures are at the furthest remove from being agreeable, considered as works of art. We have no quarrel at present with their truthfulness. They may be taken from life; but this does not prevent them from being painful pictures. To suffer without any better solace than your own self-sufficing-ness is the great moral of Miss Bronte's fiction.

Mrs. Stowe is the third whom we have named in this literary *triumvirate*. (Let not the reader be shocked by the masculinity of the word, for genius is impersonal, and literary ladies are generally supposed to be of an epicene gender.) The success of "Uncle Tom" has been, as the play-bills express it, "immense." Mrs. Stowe had the sagacity to perceive that heroes of the white race, and with European features, had become decidedly commonplace. The sagacity of this conception was only surpassed by the wonderful vigor of her execution—in supplying a succedaneous order of heroes. Emerson had written on "Representative Men," but strangely overlooked the negro race, as though Africa had never been any thing more than what Horace calls her, "the dry nurse of lions." It was left for Mrs. Stowe to do justice to the neglected African. "Uncle Tom" appeared partly as the "representative man" of his race, and partly as a living contradiction of the high Calvinistic dogma that

> In Adam's fall
> We sinned all.

Uncle Tom, in fact, is a black Jeremiah, not certainly by reason of his lamentations, for he always renders blessing for cursing, and new thanksgiving for a fresh larupping, but because he "was sanctified from the womb." The idea, it must be admitted, was novel. The execution was effective. A new literature was begotten in a day. Genius, for once, reaped its reward in dollars and cents. "Uncle Tom took like wildfire." The "reading public" found a new excitement, and made the most of it.

AFFLICTING CALAMITY.

The Lockport (N. Y.) Courier of Monday furnishes the particulars of the terrible disaster (mentioned yesterday under our Telegraphic head) which took place in that village on Sunday afternoon. We extract some of the details, as follows:

We are called upon to record an awful and solemn visitation of Providence—one that has thrown a gloom over the entire community—yesterday afternoon, just after the services at the Congregational Church had commenced, causing the death of Mr. Luther Crocker, jr., and injuring more or less Samuel Durfee; Cyrus C. Northam; a lad about 14 years of age, son of William Mack; Mary Place, daughter of George Place; Frances Holmes, daughter of Alfred Holmes; and Miss Sarah Stewart.

The lightning struck the church steeple on the southwest corner, passing down into the gallery occupied by the singers, which was directly under the steeple, and all the persons affected by the shock were members of the choir. They were about concluding the introductory hymn when the shock came, carrying death, sorrow, and dismay into their midst. The main streak of electricity entered the gallery directly over the head of Mr. Crocker, who was playing the bass viol, and diverged off either way, injuring the persons named above.

The first moment after the shock was one of universal consternation and dismay. Every person in the gallery, numbering some twelve or fifteen, except one or two, were prostrated by the shock, but those that escaped injury, aided by persons from below, immediately proceeded to the assistance of the unfortunate. Some of the injured persons had their faces and bodies burnt, making them present a horrible picture. They were all removed as quick as possible to the open air, and the proper remedies were applied, under the direction of Drs. Fassett and Gould—who, providentially, were in the church at the time—which were successful in restoring to consciousness all except Mr. Crocker. The deceased, to all outward appearances, sustained the least injury of any of the sufferers, but he was doubtless visited with the heaviest shock.

The scene within the church immediately after the shock is represented by an eye-witness to have been awful in the extreme. The pastor, Rev. Mr. GILMAN, whose position in the pulpit was such as to enable him to see at a glance the terrible effect of the lightning, fainted away, as did several of the ladies, and a ghastly paleness overspread every countenance. The shock was so terrific, and its effects so astounding, that it seemed to deprive all of the power of giving vent to their feelings in the manner usually exhibited on similar but less appalling occasions. Not a shriek or a groan was heard, save the almost inaudible ones made by some one of the victims; no bustle or confusion ensued, but dread consternation seemed to have taken possession of all for the moment. As the bodies were removed out in front of the church, a crowd gathered, and as the dread intelligence spread hundreds came to offer their sympathy. There has never been an occurrence in our midst which has seemed to spread such universal gloom and sadness.

FOREIGN.

FROM OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.

PARIS, MAY 10, 1853.

The health of the Empress of the French was as good as could be expected after the unfortunate event which took place on the evening of the 29th ultimo. This event was so little expected by the Emperor that only one hour before it occurred his Majesty dictated a despatch to be forwarded to Spain for the sister of the Empress, announcing the satisfactory situation of the Empress, and the gratification felt by himself in anticipated paternity. His official and professional adviser, however, (M. PAUL DUBOIS,) accoucheur of the Empress, had not partaken for several days past of the Emperor's confidence, and the event of the 29th did not surprise him. A mass had been ordered by his Majesty in a spirit of gratitude to Divine Providence for removing from him the threatened calamity. After the event it was converted into one of thanksgiving for the satisfactory condition of the Empress—a condition, in fact, so satisfactory that a few hours afterwards, it being the Sabbath, his Majesty evinced the little uneasiness it afforded him by amusing himself upon the race-course.

The Imperial family is still at the Tuileries, but it is expected that they will soon take up their residence for the summer at St. Cloud. The contemplated excursions of their Majesties to the departments of the north and west of France have been positively adjourned to the fall. Nothing is said, either, of the coronation at present. This important ceremony seems also adjourned. From the fact that it is adjourned it is fair to conclude that NAPOLEON has not yet abandoned all hope of obtaining the services of the Pope upon the occasion. His Holiness, there is but little doubt, has for the moment decided the question negatively. It remains to be seen whether he will be sufficiently ill advised to persist. If gratitude for past services rendered him by LOUIS NAPOLEON cannot avail, fear for future disservice which Napoleon III. may be in a position to render him should avail (considering the question merely as one of policy) to induce him to come. The positive ill-will of the Emperor of the French suggests no very comforting anticipations with regard to one who is the object of it. And the condition of Europe is sufficiently critical at the present moment to forbid all certitude in the prevision that the opportunity for displaying his ill-will will not soon arise. Were I permitted to advise him I would say, "Come; come, by all means. If some difficult question of casuistry arises, settle it favorably, with mental reservation if you please—and come. Besides, is not the Pope infallible? If it is impossible to stipulate beforehand some great good to the Church to be gained by coming, let the reasonable hope of averting great evil from it prevail with you. I predict that if you definitively refuse to place the crown upon the head of Napoleon III. and give the Papal benediction to his authority, ere five years shall have elapsed as dangerous a crisis will arrive for your temporal and spiritual power as that which you passed through in 1848 and 1849."

The Legislative Corps is voting at a galloping rate laws of local interest, and the Senate with equal dispatch puts upon them its imprimature. The discussion of the budget and of some other laws of general interest and importance has not yet commenced, yet the session must close in three or four days. It is believed that an imperial decree will prolong the session for a couple of weeks in order to pass the most urgent bills. The bill modifying the organization of juries for the trial of judicial cases has become law. The change was necessary to put the institution of jury trial in accordance with the existing political institutions of the country. Although the public discussion of the budget has not yet taken place, the legislative committee to which it was referred has made its report. This document is even more what such a document ought to be under the actual regime than that of last year. The Assembly is evidently getting to feel easier in the harness made for it by the new constitution. It sorely galled at first some of the members who had been accustomed to do legislative business with the freedom, which is now deemed so unseemly, of the late Legislative Assemblies. The committee ventured to suggest further reductions of the budget to the amount of some four or five hundred thousand dollars. These were graciously acceded to by the Emperor, and thus the balance in favor of the treasury is increased by another small sum, very inconsiderable, to be sure, when compared with the gross amount of the budget. The nearest approach to an independent will and serious legislative criticism is evinced in a portion of the report, which timidly expresses regret that Government had not been more exact in apportioning to specific services the gross sums assigned in the budget to the various departments of the State. The apprehension is insinuated, with as much delicacy as possible, that Government had in mind when preparing the budget, or if it did not have in mind this time it might possibly in future, a provision of the law which authorizes the executive to arbitrarily transfer appropriations from one chapter to another of the same department after the budget as a whole has been voted. This faculty, in the hands of a skilful Minister of the Finances, could be used to invest the budget, upon its presentation to the Assembly for legislative sanction, with a much less objectionable dress and air than it will afterwards have in practical execution.

It is understood that M. DE MONTALEMBERT, whose fitful opposition imparted to the session of last year almost all the animation and interest it possessed, proposed last week to the legislative committee an amendment striking out of the budget of receipts an item of about two hundred thousand dollars, the proceeds of the sale of the Chateau of Neuilly, and of the park of Monceau, forming a portion of the property of the late King Louis Philippe, confiscated by Louis Napoleon a few days after his assumption of absolute power. The committee of course refused to take the amendment into consideration, upon the ground that "by the terms of the actual constitution the decrees of the 22d January had the force of law."

The Legislative Assembly of Belgium is engaged at the present moment in an interesting discussion relative to the organization of the army of that country. The Minister has asked an appropriation for raising the nominal military force to one hundred thousand men; that is to say, for an increase of twenty thousand over the provisions of the law of 1845, the last which regulated the strength of the standing army. For this purpose the Minister asks for $6,017,660. It is perfectly evident to every reader of the reported debates that this proposed increase of military force has special reference to France, and is dictated by want of confidence in the pacific character of the new French Empire. Belgium has not the confidence that Napoleon III. himself professes to have that "*l'empire c'est le paix*."

"In case of war," said M. BROUCKERE, Minister of Foreign Affairs, "the neutrality of Belgium would doubtless not be respected by the belligerent party who broke the treaties. But what would the parties who respected the treaties by virtue of which Belgium exists say if we had taken no means to defend our own existence, and respond by our own resources to the certain assistance which they would lend us?"

The Minister added that the proposition was dictated by such potent considerations, and was of such vital importance to Belgium, that, even if the Chamber should reject it and the minority should retire before a hostile vote, their successors would be forced to immediately renew it. The measure will doubtless be carried almost unanimously. Members of all parties support it. With such unanimity where is the use of so much discussion? Orator after orator rises to utter the identically same opinions, with a little variation in form. Every speaker has evidently in view the danger, not imminent but probable, in no distant future of a French invasion.

"Are diplomatic treaties," asks one gentleman, "a sufficient protection? They have just that value, and no more than that, which is possessed by the articles of your penal code. These protect society; but it is upon condition that there be magistrates and gendarmes at hand ready to enforce respect to those articles."

"The recent assurances of Government are encouraging," says another, "for the maintenance of peace; but nevertheless we should not omit to take the measures of precaution which prudence suggests. England, Russia, and all the principal Powers of the continent are increasing their armaments. Shall Belgium isolate herself by remaining in the rear of all this movement? This cannot be intended. It is all in vain that our neutrality is guarantied by treaties. We must be in a position to enforce respect to it."

It is impossible to omit seeing that it is distrust of Napoleon III. and of his intentions that has inspired the measure now discussed in Belgium. Under Louis Philippe, under the Republic even, the military precautions now deemed so indispensable were not thought necessary. The law fixing the standard army at eighty thousand dates from 1845.

"By promptly incurring," said one of the orators, "the expenses now required for putting the military defences of the country upon a proper footing, you may be effecting a most important economy by preventing an invasion of the country. A hostile occupation may take place. What would you do in that case with a disorganized army? An occupation of another kind may occur—an occupation by friendly Powers; and you are in duty bound, even with respect to them, to put yourselves in a position that will command respect, and show to our allies that Belgium is not a country to fall into the hands of the first who shall chose to seize upon her. Resistance is possible; competent men have told you so; and if resistance is possible it would be proving false to the holiest of duties if in advance we abandon the idea of making it. I oppose to the single voice that has been raised in this assembly in support of a contrary opinion (and I was profoundly grieved to hear even that one) the unanimous opinion of the commission and the confidence of the whole army." * * *

"If Belgium yielded without resistance she would become the object of contempt to all Europe, instead of being, as at present, the object of its admiration. And if we are to decree in anticipation the humiliation of my country in presence of a foreign invasion, I should blush to be called a Belgian, and the country would ever have to blush for its name before posterity."

The Minister, M. BROUCKERE, said, in his opening remarks:

"However good may be the intentions and sincere the interest felt in our behalf by the Powers which have guarantied our political existence, it is an incontestable fact that it would require considerable time for them to come to our assistance in case one of their number, pretending to be disengaged from the treaties which now bind it, should invade a portion of our territory. But this invasion, if it did encounter on our part a serious and prolonged resistance, would become our condemnation. Even if it were only partial and temporary, such invasion would be our disgrace and ruin, and Europe would have the right to say to us that we had deceived its trust, that we had not answered the end which had dictated to Europe the policy of permitting Belgium to constitute itself an independent nation." * * * "Believe me, gentlemen, in the event of a European war, an eventuality that we should provide against, even though not believing it probable, whatever party should be the victor, the victor would have but slight respect and small sympathy for a people who stingily counted the money spent in its defence, and who had left to others the care of protecting its frontiers and of saving or of restoring its nationality."

Now, I am no alarmist, and I believe as firmly as my brother correspondent of the Journal of Commerce, whose letter you quoted lately with so much approbation, that peace is the interest and the wish of all the people of Europe. But I cannot, for all that, partake his conviction that the peace of Europe is assured. Peace and war are not questions determined here, as they are with us, by the interest and wishes of the people. They depend upon the will, the passions, the supposed interests of one fallible, ambitious, daring, unscrupulous man. I devoted a couple of letters some months ago to the exposition of the causes which would impel the new Emperor of the French to break the peace of Europe—causes personal to himself, and which would almost certainly control and give character to this policy, despite the interests and wishes of the majority of his subjects, which may be safely assumed to be in favor of peace. My views as then expressed have not been changed. The discussion which is now progressing in the Belgian capital is proof that there at least my apprehensions are not considered without foundation and chimerical. Yet at present I can see no symptoms that threaten the peace of Europe this year. It is very possible that, unless some new exciting cause arise, the policy which I attribute to Napoleon III. may not ripen to war even in 1854; but I have much miscalculated Louis Napoleon if the year 1855 be suffered to pass without some decisive demonstration on his part for the reannexation to the Empire of Belgium and Savoy. And there are many reasons that make me doubt more than M. Brouckere seems to whether the kings will not permit that annexation by treaty rather than light up in Europe the conflagration of a general war, of which no one can say when it will end or what it will not consume.

FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE.

In the British HOUSE OF COMMONS, on the 10th of May, Mr. T. CHAMBERS moved for leave to introduce a bill to "facilitate the recovery of personal liberty in certain cases," especially in the case of those detained in monastic establishments against their will. In the course of his speech "he enumerated the reasons which had produced the impression that the Roman Catholic nunneries were not, as alleged, societies of contented and happy females, but that the inmates were retained there against their inclination, though entitled to their liberty by British law. He anticipated objections to legislation upon this subject, one of which was that it was an invasion of religious liberty; but the object was not to interfere with religious, but to protect civil liberty. It appeared that there were seventy-five Roman Catholic nunneries in England and Wales, but there were likewise perhaps one hundred Anglo-Catholic nunneries, which required quite as much looking after. The inmates of these establishments, he observed, were subjected to irresponsible power, exercised in secret; the fair inference was that the law should be vigilant in protecting persons so secluded; whereas nuns were less under the protection of the law than lunatics, factory children, or parish apprentices. Moreover, these institutions were affiliated with similar institutions abroad, and a woman might be transported for life without the possibility of tracing her. These institutions were no part of the Roman Catholic Church; they existed at the option of the rulers of that church; and he contended that it was too late, in the face of modern legislation, to press the maxim that an Englishman's house was his castle. He proposed, therefore, that the Secretary of State for the Home Department should have the power of appointing one or more persons, where there were reasonable grounds to infer the exercise of coercion and restraint towards any female anywhere, to go, in company with a justice of the peace, to the house, see the party, ascertain the facts, and, if necessary, put the ordinary law in force by writ of *habeas corpus*."

The motion was supported by Mr. C. BERKELEY, who said that he had been refused permission to see an intimate personal friend, who had gone into a convent, except in the presence of the lady abbess. Lord JOHN RUSSELL opposed it very strongly. After considerable debate, leave was given to bring in a bill by a majority of 23.

FRANCE.

The session of the *Corps Legislatif*, which should have closed on the 13th instant, had been prolonged, by decree, to the 28th.

The *Assemblee Nationale* announces that the French Government has been informed by M. DE LACOUR that the question of the Holy Places is finally settled, and that questions of secondary importance only will form the subjects of further negotiations.

The same journal says that the differences between Austria and Sardinia are tending to an amicable settlement; that the Sardinian Ambassador will return to Vienna; and that the refugees who are naturalized in Sardinia will be freed from the consequences of the sequestration.

TURKEY.

Advices from Constantinople and Smyrna are to April 27. Lord STRATFORD appeared satisfied with the settlement of the question of the Holy Places. He was preparing for a struggle on the question of the Greek Patriarchate.

Yielding to Russia and Austria, the Turkish Government had resolved to expel all the political refugees from the territories of the Ottoman Empire. The order for their expulsion has been communicated to five Italians. The same measure will be applied to the Hungarians and the Wallachians.

RUSSIA AND CHINA.

A letter from St. Petersburg of April 25th says: There is much talk in the best informed circles of a secret mission of a Russian Envoy sent to China overland, and who it is said had already arrived at Kiatha. It was confidently reported that the object of his mission was to offer to the sovereign of the Celestial Empire the aid of Russia in quelling the insurrection in his dominions.

Letters have been received in England from Shanghai, five days later than those by the last overland mail, stating that the Chinese authorities had applied to the British Consul for assistance against the rebels, and that the Consul had referred the matter to the Governor at Hong Kong. The authenticity of the statement is doubtful, but it is believed to have some foundation.

THE PACIFIC RAILROAD.

Messrs. GALES & SEATON: I noticed in your paper of the 10th instant a letter from C. CARSON, in which he speaks favorably of a route to the Pacific to cross the Del Norte, south of Santa Fé, at or near Albuquerque, passing thence north of the Gila river, the point to be reached on the Pacific being San Francisco.

By this route, after reaching the valley of the Tulares lake, the distance to San Francisco, and that too in a line nearly at right angles to that just passed over, is between three hundred and four hundred miles.

In a communication published some months since in the Intelligencer, I suggested a route, over part of which I had travelled, altogether practicable, to terminate at San Diego, instead of San Francisco.

This route, leaving Memphis, or some neighboring point on the Mississippi, would cross the Del Norte about two hundred and seventy miles below Santa Fé, and one hundred and twenty or one hundred and thirty miles north of El Paso; passing thence south of the Gila river, crossing the Colorado below the mouth of the Gila.

Measuring in a straight line, San Diego is some two hundred miles nearer than San Francisco is, even to St. Louis; and to Washington the difference in distance is of course greater.

A great national highway, like the railroad contemplated to be made to the Pacific, where the main object is not to reach any particular city on the Pacific coast, but the great markets of Asia, of the islands of the West Pacific and Indian Oceans, and of the Western coast of our own continent, should not diverge from its proper direction to accommodate intermediate points, if one of them should be even the great and growing city of San Francisco.

San Diego has a safe and commodious port; can be reached by the route proposed at all seasons of the year, on a line very much shorter than can be drawn to San Francisco.

Why, then, has so little been said in favor of making San Diego the terminating point of the road to the Pacific rather than San Francisco?

It seems to me that this point and this route have not had a due share of public attention in connexion with the proposed enterprise, about which the public mind has been so far interested as that a large appropriation of money was made by the last Congress to defray the cost of preparatory surveys. D.

[No. 492.]

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

IN pursuance of law, I, FRANKLIN PIERCE, President of the United States, do hereby declare and make known that public sales of the sections and parts of sections of land, all bearing the *odd numbers*, which remain to the United States, within six miles on each side of the line of the Mobile and Ohio River railroad, in the States of Alabama and Mississippi, subject to double the minimum price of the public lands, as provided by the act of 20th September, 1850, will be held at the following land offices, in the States of Alabama and Mississippi, at the periods hereinafter designated, to wit:

At the land office at ST. STEPHENS, in Alabama, commencing on Monday, the *fifth* day of *September next*, for the disposal of such sections and parts of sections, being the *odd numbers* above referred to, as are situated in the undermentioned townships, to wit:

North of the base line and west of the principal meridian.

Townships one and *two*, of range one.
Townships one, *two, three*, and *four*, of range two.
Townships one, two, three, *four*, and *five*, of range three.
Townships *one, two, three*, four, *five, six*, and *seven*, of range four.
Townships *three*, four, five, six, and *seven*, of range five.

South of the base line and west of the principal meridian.

Townships *one, two, three, four*, and *five*, of range one.
Townships one, two, three, *four*, and *five*, of range two.
Townships *one, two*, and *three*, of range three.
Township *one*, of range four.

South of the base line and east of the principal meridian.

Township *three* and *four*, of range one.

At the land office at DEMOPOLIS, in the same State, commencing on Monday, the *twelfth* day of *September next*, for the disposal of such sections and parts of sections, being the *odd numbers* above referred to, as are situated in the undermentioned townships, to wit:

North of the base line and west of the principal meridian.

Townships *eighteen, nineteen*, and *twenty*, of range four.

At the land office at TUSCALOOSA, in the same State, commencing on Monday, the *fifth* day of *September next*, for the disposal of such sections and parts of sections, being the *odd numbers* above referred to, as are situated in the undermentioned townships, to wit:

North of the base line, and west of the principal meridian in the Southern surveying district.

Township *twenty-one*, of range four.

At the land office at COLUMBUS, in Mississippi, commencing on Monday, the *nineteenth* day of *September next*, for the disposal of such sections and parts of sections, being the *odd numbers* above referred to, as are situated in the undermentioned townships, to wit:

North of the base line and east of the Choctaw meridian.

Townships *eight, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen*, and *twenty*, of range fifteen.
Townships *eight, nine, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen*, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, and twenty, of range sixteen.
Townships eight, *nine, ten, eleven, twelve*, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, *seventeen, eighteen*, and *nineteen*, of range seventeen.
Townships *eight*, nine, ten, eleven, *twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen*, and *sixteen*, of range eighteen.
Townships *eight*, nine, ten, eleven, and *twelve*, of range nineteen.

At the land office at AUGUSTA, in the same State, commencing on Monday, the *twenty-sixth* day of *September next*, for the disposal of such sections and parts of sections, being the *odd numbers* above referred to, as are situated in the undermentioned townships, to wit:

North of the base line and east of the Choctaw meridian.

Township *four*, of range thirteen.
Townships *one, two, three, four, five*, and *six*, of range fourteen.
Townships one, two, three, four, five, six, and *seven*, of range fifteen.
Townships *one, two, three, four, five*, six, and seven, of range sixteen.
Townships *one, five, six*, and *seven*, of range seventeen.
Township *seven* of range eighteen.

North of the base line, west of the meridian, and east of Pearl river.

Townships *three, four, five*, six, seven, and *eight*, of range five.
Townships *five, six*, seven, eight, *nine*, and *ten*, of range six.
Townships *seven, eight*, nine, and ten, of range seven.
Townships *eight, nine*, and *ten*, of range eight.

The townships herein designated in Roman letters are wholly within the limits of "six sections in width on each side of said road," and those in *italics* are *partly* within said limits, as designated on the diagrams, which will be furnished to the respective district land offices by the Commissioner of the General Land Office.

Lands reserved for schools, military, and other purposes will be excluded from sale.

The lands will be sold *subject to the right* of way granted by the said act of 20th September, 1850, to the States aforesaid, for said railroad, not exceeding *one hundred feet* on each side thereof; and therefore the particular tracts of land which include the road will be sold as containing the quantities respectively shown by the official plats.

Each sale will be kept open for a time sufficient to admit of offering all the lands, but not exceeding two weeks, and applications to make private entries of the lands offered under this proclamation will not be received until after the close of the public sale.

Given under my hand, at the city of Washington, the twenty-third day of May, A. D. 1853.

FRANKLIN PIERCE.

By the President:
JOHN WILSON,
Commissioner of the General Land Office.

Notice to actual settlers on lands of the United States originally withdrawn from market on account of the railroad grant.

Under the act of Congress, approved 3d March, 1853, entitled "An act to extend pre-emption rights to certain lands therein mentioned," the pre-emption laws of the United States as they now exist are extended over the alternate reserved sections of public lands along the line of the railroad hereinbefore mentioned, where the settlement and improvement were made *prior to the final allotment* of the alternate sections of the said railroad. Therefore, all claims by pre-emption to any of the alternate sections of public lands within the limits originally reserved will attach, if predicated upon settlements made prior to the 4th February, 1853, the date of the final allotment.

Claims within the six miles limits must be proven up at any time before the day herein fixed for the commencement of the public sale, and are to be paid for at the rate of two dollars and fifty cents per acre. Claims outside of the six miles, and within the limits of the original reservation, must be proven up prior to the restoration of said lands to private entry.

Soldiers' bounty land warrants, at a dollar and twenty-five cents per acre, may be received in payment for either class of lands; one warrant only, however, can be located by each pre-emptor.

Immediately after the close of the public sale directed by the foregoing proclamation of the President, applications will be received for the purchase at private entry, or location by warrants, of the lands reserved to satisfy this grant, outside of the six miles limits, in such order as to prevent confusion and insure accuracy, in accordance with instructions to be issued to the registers and receivers.

JOHN WILSON,
Commissioner of the General Land Office.

may 26—w13w